

TORRICELLI] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TORRICELLI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia [Ms. MCKINNEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. MCKINNEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

COMMEMORATING THE 81ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. ESHOO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Representative PALLONE, Representative PORTER, and all my colleagues participating in raising awareness on this, the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide and the 1.5 million Armenians who were systematically exterminated by Ottoman troops.

The slaughter began on April 24, 1915, when hundreds of Armenian leaders were arrested and executed in Istanbul and other areas.

By the time they were finished, Ottoman troops had executed 1.5 million Armenians including innocent women and children.

Tragically, the voices of these innocent victims fell upon deaf ears because the international community refused to confront the perpetrators of these atrocities.

As the only Member of Congress of Armenian descent, I know full well how the Ottoman Empire decimated a people—my people—and wrote one of the darkest chapters in human history. I'm committed to ensure that the suffering is not diminished, and not be denied by the perpetrators of this disgraceful policy.

By recalling the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide we remind the world that a great tragedy was inflicted upon the Armenian people, that the murder of Armenians was a catastrophe for the entire family of nations, and that unchecked aggression leads to atrocity.

By mourning the losses of our past, we renew our determination to forge a future in which the Armenian people can live in peace, prosperity, and freedom.

Despite the history of suffering at the hands of others, Armenians have remained a strong people, committed to family and united by an enduring faith.

The Armenian people have risen from the ashes of the Armenian Genocide to form a new country from the remains of the Soviet Union * * * a new country which flourishes in the face of severe winters, ongoing military conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh, and the absence of strong international assistance.

Today's Armenia is a living tribute to the indelible courage and perseverance of the Armenian people and the assurance that what took place 81 years ago will not be repeated.

As we remember the tragic history of the Armenian people, it's essential also for us to discuss the future of Armenia and the role which the United States can play in establishing peace in the Caucasus.

In my view, true peace in the Caucasus will only be achieved when the political and economic isolation of Armenia ceases and regional leaders recognize the inherent rights of Armenia—including its land and its history. Congress can continue to play an important part in this process.

The Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, which became law for fiscal year 1996 as part of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, is essential because it exerts the appropriate pressure on countries which block U.S. foreign assistance to the region. This measure must be made permanent law as soon as possible, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to do so.

In my view, it's not enough for third party nations to allow commercial flights into aid-recipient countries—land convoys must be allowed through in order to move necessary amounts of American food, medicine, and clothing.

In addition, we must maintain the Freedom of Support Act of 1992. We should reinstate Section 907, which would prevent United States foreign assistance going to Azerbaijan until they lift their blockade of Nagorno-Karabagh. The Freedom of Support Act must be upheld until the isolation of Armenia ends and its territorial rights are adhered to.

Mr. Speaker, if the tragedy of the Armenian genocide has taught us anything, it is sitting back is tantamount to helping Armenia's oppressors.

As Members of Congress, we have the responsibility of ensuring that an enhanced U.S. role in the affairs of the Caucasus follows a course sensitive to the region's history and culture. This includes a heightened sensitivity to Armenia, who's history and culture are often denied or misunderstood.

We must do all we can to prevent this tragic history from repeating itself and help advance a proactive foreign policy to bring lasting peace to the region.

I thank my colleagues who have joined us here today to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying my remarks also are in memory of someone that was a great leader in the Armenian community, a relative of mine, Aram Bayramian, who was, I think, the essence of what his forefathers were and continue to be, a great American, a great patriot, a man of great faith in family, someone that served this Nation and was devoted not only to the Armenian community but the entire community.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 81ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today is the sad and solemn day when annually we remember one of the great tragedies of humankind. Today marks the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide, the first genocide of the 20th century.

I have come to the floor of the House today to acknowledge the atrocities suffered by the Armenian people at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. On April 23, 1915, over 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were massacred in Turkey. Little did anyone know that April 23, 1915, would signify the beginning of a Turkish campaign to remove the Armenian people from the face of the earth.

Over the following 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians perished, and more than 500,000 were exiled from their homes. Armenian civilization, one of the oldest civilizations, virtually ceased to exist, which, of course, was the Turkish plan.

But despite the brutality, Armenian civilization lives on today. It lives on in the new independent republic of Armenia, and it lives on in communities throughout America, particularly in my home State of California.

Today we honor the innocent Armenians who barely got a chance to see the 20th century. Today we acknowledge that the Ottoman Turks committed genocide against the Armenian people and we demand that his undeniable fact be acknowledged by the current leaders in Istanbul.

I look forward to the day when the world says in one united voice, "We remember the Armenian genocide." Until that date comes, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to stand up with my colleagues to remind the House of Representatives of our responsibility to remember and of our responsibility to speak out against any genocide, past or present.

COMMEMORATING THE 81ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN HOLOCAUST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island [Mr. REED] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the Armenian Holocaust. On this date in 1915, the Ottoman Empire and the successor Turkish nationalist regime began a brutal policy of deportation and slaughter. Over the next 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians would be ruthlessly massacred at the hands of the Turks, and another 500,000 would have their property confiscated and be driven from their homeland. Engrossed in its own problems at the time, the world